A GUIDE TO PARSIFAL

BY

RICHARD ALDRICH

A GUIDE TO PARSIFAL

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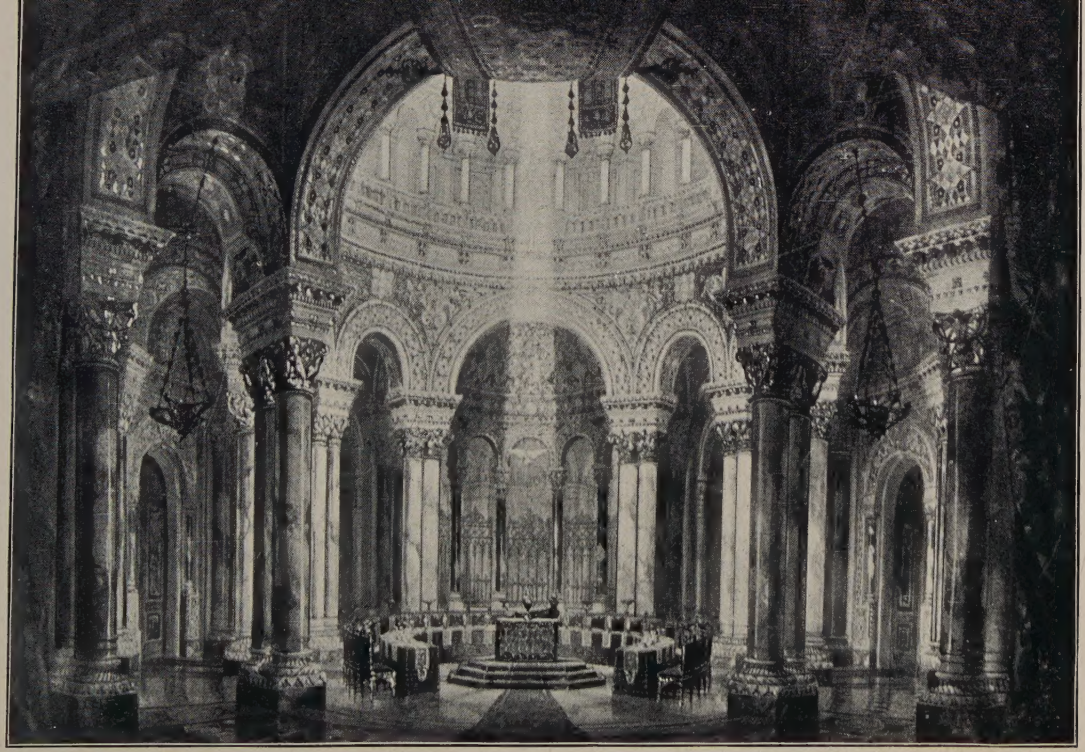

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THE HALL OF THE GRAIL

ACT I, SCENE 2
ACT III, SCENE 1

A Guide to Parsifal

THE MUSIC DRAMA OF
RICHARD WAGNER

ITS ORIGIN, STORY, AND MUSIC

BY

RICHARD ALDRICH

BOSTON
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PREFACE

THIS little book can make small claim to originality. It is an attempt to assemble, for the interest and guidance of listeners to "Parsifal," some of the most important facts about the sources, the origin, the characters and the poetical and musical structure of that work. The author acknowledges a special indebtedness to Maurice Kufferath's book on "Parsifal," to Hans von Wolzogen's "Guide through the Music of Parsifal;" in less measure to H. E. Krehbiel's "Studies in the Wagnerian Drama," and to W. J. Henderson's biography of the master. For permission to use portions of his articles published in *The New York Times*, he desires also to express his thanks to the publisher of that journal.

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From Photographs by Pach Bros. of the original drawings made by H. Burckhardt & Co., Vienna.

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INTRODUCTORY

"PARSIFAL," the last product of Richard Wagner's long creative activity, is differentiated in many ways from any of his previous works, and from any other lyric drama. In subject and in style, and in its general effect upon the stage, it stands by itself. It is a religious drama; Wagner's designation of it as "ein Bühnenweihfestspiel," may be translated as "a sacred stage festival play." Its subject and the treatment of it are mystical: there are many religious elements in it; the philosophical tendencies of its outlook upon life are more deliberate and more obvious than those of its predecessors. There are ethical bases upon which many of its fundamental ideas and incidents rest. There are deep and complex symbolisms conveyed through the characters and their interplay in the action of the drama. Its music shows differences in style and manner, as well as in the general quality of its inspiration, from that of any of Wagner's previous music dramas — in which it but repeats the history of its predecessors; for one of the facts that most astounds the student of his works is the progressive change that marks them from "Rienzi" to "Parsifal." They are all unmistakably Wagner's; yet each one is a different expression of the same musical spirit, and the series shows a steady advance in the power,

complexity, subtlety, and originality of the purely musical part.

While the earlier works of Wagner have won at last a general acceptance from the public and acquiescence from even the earlier inimical criticism, debate has persisted over "Parsifal," and its individual characteristics have arrayed against it a determined hostility. This is based, not on a general opposition to the principles of Wagner's art and his methods as a lyrical dramatist, — for the "Wagner question" is no longer a living issue, — but upon the nature of "Parsifal" itself; upon the religious and philosophical ideas it embodies; upon the moral grounds it sets forth; upon the character of its personages and the ideals that animate them; and upon the alleged failure of the inspiration of the music, the weakening and dwindling of the fire of Wagner's genius assumed to be displayed in it. On the other hand, "Parsifal" is hailed as a supreme embodiment of the highest task a lyrical dramatist can set himself; as a profound and uplifting presentation of the subtlest and deepest spiritual truths; as a sublimated essence of the composer's musical expression raised to its highest power of exalted potency, and couched in the most highly developed and perfectly finished musical language that Wagner ever commanded.

The music of "Parsifal" is indeed different from the music of the earlier dramas, because it must be, because it had something essentially different to express and to interpret. And because it is not the music of "Tristan," with its strains of passion and sensuous longing and ecstatic ardor;

or of "Das Rheingold," with its simple, transparent picturing of elemental beings of the upper and the nether world; or of "Siegfried," showing forth the imperious buoyancy of the hero untouched by fear and the fresh and joyous outdoor nature in which he lives — because it is not these, it does not follow that the music of "Parsifal" is limp, weak, or failing in inspiration. It is other than these because it is itself; a complete and faithful embodiment of the dramatic and philosophic premises and proceedings by which it is conditioned and to which it is indissolubly welded. "A golden stream of tone it is," as one of its most vehement opponents has styled it; an "almost miraculous musicianship" has produced it; the latest blossoming of a great master's technical powers.

WAGNER'S MUSICAL STYLE

Those who study and listen to "Parsifal" will find it absolutely true to the type of Wagner's latest development of musical style as applied to the lyric drama. In all the reams of essays that he wrote to define and to explain his system, a few facts stand forth conspicuously as the foundation of that system. His attempt was, first, to reverse the relation in which music stood to the dramatic element of the conventional opera, and to make the drama the chief thing, music one of a number of subsidiary elements employed to express it; music is only one of the means of expression, not the principal end — the others being poetic diction, action and declamation, scenic art

and all the other accessories that go to make up the stage picture. These are fused together in a complete organic union, working harmoniously for the embodiment of the poet's thought. As a necessary postulate, the libretto or text must become in itself a consistent and reasonable drama rather than the amorphous, often foolish and unintelligible thing that it is in the conventional, pre-Wagnerian opera.

As a consequence of his view of the function of music in the lyric drama, it comes to take on a different form from that which was settled by the almost uniform practice of his forerunners. They had developed melodic patterns, regular in form, involving a certain balance and recurrence of phrase — the characteristics known to everybody as those of a complete tune or air. Successions of these tunes, for single voices or for voices in combinations of two or more, or in chorus, became the chief substance of operatic music, separated by passages of frankly unmelodious character, called recitative. Wagner found the highest embodiment of his musical ideal for the lyric drama through a wholly different method. Short melodic phrases or themes that were associated with specific meanings and charged with a certain emotional color he made the foundation of his musical structure. They were repeated, necessarily, as the set patterns or tunes of the earlier operatic writers were repeated; only, now, the repetitions and the order of their recurrence, were made to follow the significance of the text and the course of the action and to depend upon them, rather than upon the

arbitrary and preconceived formulas of the older sort. They were combined, developed, built up, as a substratum to the text, presented generally in the orchestra, which has a vastly greater potency and resource of expression than the single voice upon the stage. The voice was set to delivering the text in a musical declamation, or kind of endless melody, speech of heightened and intensified expressiveness, varying in its melodic facture according to the nature of the mood to be expounded. The two were inseparably connected and built into each other's substance, — this vast, endless orchestral stream of musical interpretation or commentary and this melodious declamation; but the object was always, not musical alone, but dramatic; that is, an exposition of the significance of the text, and of the dramatic proceedings of which it is the mouthpiece. The cadences and closes by which the old-fashioned tunes are divided from each other, whereby the action is chopped into fragments, are abolished. The music is coterminous with each act of the opera and follows exactly the action within the act.

A study of the Wagnerian dramas naturally suggests a study of the themes, the leading motives, that enter into the structure of the music, that are combined in the great orchestral fabric forming the background of the work. It is true that Wagner's music is entirely intelligible in and of itself, as a part of the drama. It was his contention that a theatrical audience need not have a special knowledge of music to receive the right impression from a musical drama; still less does it need

an intimate knowledge of the special significance of the themes and melodic material out of which the music is constructed. The motives must, and it is the chief source of the power of Wagner's music dramas that they do, create of themselves the proper emotional state in the mind of the hearer. None the less, it is certain that appreciation and intimate understanding of the music, and thus of the unfolding of the drama, are increased by a knowledge and recognition of the motives. Hence a large portion of this book is devoted to an enumeration of them and a discussion of their use.

A GUIDE TO PARSIFAL

Part I.

THE ORIGINS OF PARSIFAL

We have spoken of the religious character of "Parsifal." Its basis is found in the series of mediæval legends relating to the Holy Grail, the quest of the Grail, the knights and defenders of the Grail. Early in his career as a dramatic composer, Wagner came to the definite conclusion — a conclusion that had with him the weight of an artistic principle — that the proper subjects for treatment in the lyric drama were to be found in the great mass of popular legends — the mythology of the Teutons. His first important opera, "Rienzi," was an opera in the old-fashioned sense, and like most others of its kind, like Meyerbeer's, on whose model it was avowedly based, it was the elaboration of a historical subject. Before he undertook his next, "Der Fliegende Holländer," Wagner had convinced himself of the futility of such historical subjects for dramatic treatment, especially the treatment to which his gradually formulating views as to dramatic truth and the true function of dramatic music were leading him.

He was beginning to recognize that in the highest form of musical drama the emotions of the scene must be the predominating force upon which music must be centred. But in the historical drama the details of movement and all the accessories are a hindrance to the broad and free play of these emotions, and hence to the unhindered development of the musical element. The employment of mythological subjects enables the dramatist to simplify the story, to broaden its lines, to make it an expression of elemental traits of humanity, to make its characters typical figures of human emotions, passions, and aspirations: embodiments of racial or national ideals. In his essay "A Communication to My Friends," Wagner expresses his idea briefly thus:

> The legend, in whatever age or nation it may be placed, has the advantage that it comprehends only the purely human portion of this age or nation, and presents this portion in a form peculiar to it, thoroughly concentrated and therefore easily intelligible . . . This legendary character gives a great advantage to the poetic arrangement of the subject for the reason already mentioned, that, while the simple process of the action — easily comprehensible as far as its outward relations are concerned — renders unnecessary any painstaking for the purpose of explanation of the course of the story, the greatest possible portion of the poem can be devoted to the portrayal of the inner motives of the action — those inmost motives of the soul which, indeed, the action points out to us as necessary, through the fact that we ourselves feel in our hearts a sympathy with them.

In his search for legendary and mythological subjects, — the subjects that were utilized in

"Tannhäuser" and "Lohengrin," — Wagner came upon the great treasury of Grail stories that were spread through all the earliest literatures of Europe. He was deeply occupied with these legends in the forties, as is shown by "Lohengrin," which is based upon a portion of them, and also by his prose essay, "Die Wibelungen," published in 1848, in which he drew a comparison between the Grail legends and those relating to the Nibelung's hoard, between several elements of the two myths which he regarded as parallel, and the moral and ethical significance of them. But nothing more came of it at the time. The "Nibelung" dramas, "Tristan" and "Die Meistersinger," absorbed his attention in the years immediately following. It is not difficult to trace from his own writings, his letters and the voluminous reminiscences of his friends, the progress of Wagner's ideas through the greater part of his career, and the evolution by which his music dramas gradually took on form and substance. The "Nibelung" Trilogy was the product of such an evolution; "Parsifal" reached completion in its present form after a much longer period of incubation. The first inception of the drama may be traced back to 1855; it was not finished till 1882.

Schemes for dramas of ethical content, treating of purely religious subjects, presented themselves to Wagner early in his career. In 1849 he was thinking of one that should have for its central figure Jesus of Nazareth. He even conceived the idea that such an opera would do for the Grand Opéra in Paris, for which Liszt was urging him to

try something. Of course this came to nothing; but Wagner went on with his sketch of his New Testament drama and gave it shape — the shape it now possesses in print in the posthumous fragment, "Jesus of Nazareth." There are motives in its action still traceable in "Parsifal." There was to be the washing of the Saviour's feet, the anointing of His head. Wagner even expressed the intention of representing Jesus as loved by Mary Magdalen and as resisting her.

While he was working out his first conception of "Tristan und Isolde" in 1856, he formed the idea of another purely ethical drama, "The Victors." It was to be Buddhistic in its subject, and was to embody the Schopenhauerian philosophy, the desire for the surrender of life and for annihilation, that is set forth in "Tristan." There are traces of the Parsifal idea here, too. The hero, Ananda, was to be a chaste ascetic, loved by Prakriti who, after experiencing the torments of love without hope, renounces desire and is led to redemption in the community of Buddha. The suggestion was afterwards worked out in a different way in the figures of Parsifal and Kundry.

It is a curious fact that Wagner was again led back to Parsifal and the Grail legends through "Tristan und Isolde," which belongs to the same cycle of mediæval and earlier than mediæval stories. In his first sketch for "Tristan," which he made in 1855, Wagner intended to follow one of the ramifications of the legend connecting the characters of Tristan and Parsifal. He thought of opposing to Tristan, the hero of passion, Par-

sifal, the hero of renunciation. In the third act, after Tristan and Isolde had been reunited in the castle at Kareol, he intended to make Parsifal appear in the guise of a pilgrim to offer consolation to the anguish of the two lovers. He had even got so far as to assign to him a musical theme representative of his faith, and contrasting with the passionate plaints of Tristan. The difficulty of the treatment caused him to give up the idea, and to carry through the final scene as we now have it; but the facts are significant of the deep penetration into his mind of the Parsifal idea, even at this period of his life.

The first step toward "Parsifal," as it was destined finally to shape itself, was taken by Wagner in the spring of 1857, when he was enjoying the tranquillity that had so seldom come to him, on the little property on the Lake of Geneva, near Zürich, put at his disposition by the generosity of his friends the Wesendoncks. On Good Friday of that year, in an hour of poetic reverie, the episode recounted by Chrétien de Troyes and Wolfram von Eschenbach, of Parsifal's meeting with the pilgrims on that holy day, came to him, as he himself recounts. He wrote then the lines in which Gurnemanz describes so beautifully to Parsifal, in the third act of the music drama, the spell of Good Friday, the day of universal penitence and universal pardon:

> Des Sünders Reuethränen sind es,
> die heut' mit heil'gem Thau
> beträufet Flur und Au';
> der liess sie so gedeihen.

Nun freut sich alle Kreatur
Auf des Erlösers holder Spur,
will ihr Gebet ihm weihen.[1] . . .

It was the germ of the drama. A few days later Wagner sketched its outlines around the figure of Parsifal, the hero of renunciation and of compassion. This sketch contained not only important scenes of the drama, but musical motives as well — for, as has often been pointed out, the relations between his musical and his poetic and dramatic materials were so close in Wagner's mind that the one seldom came to him without the other. They were indissolubly connected with each other, conditioned upon each other, and in this fact is to be found one of the chief secrets of Wagner's power as a creator of the lyric drama.

But "Siegfried" and "Tristan" were then engrossing his time and attention. He was in the midst of his long and laborious work on the "Nibelung" Trilogy, still seeking and not yet finding the conclusive form in which those dramas were destined to evolve themselves in his mind. And before he had achieved his end he had "left his young Siegfried under a linden tree," as he wrote to Liszt, and had betaken himself to the composition of his great love drama, in which, as we have just seen, the figure of Parsifal was to make a

[1] The sad, repentant tears of sinners
Have here with holy rain
Besprinkled field and plain
And made them glow with beauty.
All earthly creatures in delight
At the Redeemer's trace so bright
Uplift their prayers of duty.

fleeting appearance. But the fugitive vision of that hero passed on and out of Wagner's consciousness.

Then came the years of greatest doubt and uncertainty in Wagner's stormy career, when he seemed to have reached the end of all things. He had left Zürich under a cloud; had gone through the heart-breaking experiences of the Paris fiasco with "Tannhäuser" in 1861; had sought means of livelihood in Vienna in vain; had attempted unprofitable concert tours; was as one hopelessly enmired in sorrow and discouragement, a wanderer on the face of the earth, almost an outcast, a constant fugitive from his creditors. Misunderstood by the public, scorned and assailed by musicians and critics, lashed with ridicule by almost the entire press of Europe, he was at times almost ready to give up his pretensions to being a composer. Yet in these gloomy years he wrote the text of his only comic opera, and began vigorously on the music of "Die Meistersinger," under the protection of an old friend at Zürich, who had given him a haven from his tempest-tossed wanderings. But even there the creditors found him out, and he was preparing to make another flight, when his good fortune overtook him. It was the darkest hour before the dawn. The dawn broke in the summons from the young King Ludwig II. of Bavaria, for him to come to Munich and there "complete the majestic labors of his life."

Those labors lay at first in other directions than "Parsifal." There were preparations to be made for the long deferred, almost abandoned "Nibe-

lung" dramas, and there was much to be done to complete them. There was preparation for the production of "Tristan and Isolde," and, unfortunately, there were malice and intrigue against him to be met, the change of many plans, and finally his retirement, still under the protection and in the favor of the king from the Bavarian capital to Triebschen on Lake Geneva, and finally to the little hill town of Bayreuth. Then came the long and much-troubled proceedings for the erection there of the Festival Theatre, and the final consummation of one of Wagner's most deeply cherished ideals in the performance of his works as he had conceived them and wished them to be performed.

But in the meantime the royal patron had, of course, been informed of the inchoate "Parsifal" that was lying dormant in Wagner's mind. One of his most ardent wishes was to see the completion of this drama; and at King Ludwig's urgent solicitation, Wagner, by the end of 1864, very soon after his summons to Munich, and in the midst of the arduous labors into which he plunged there, took up again the unfinished sketch of the drama and definitely completed its plan. It was so far developed that he could read it to private gatherings of his friends in 1865. It underwent changes, however, before it assumed its final shape.

There were years of exhausting activity and anxiety ahead — the years of the completion of the Bayreuth Festival Theatre and the financial uncertainties as to its outcome. They were triumphantly overcome in the successful opening of

the house in 1876; and immediately thereafter Wagner betook himself to the completion of "Parsifal." The poem he finished early in 1877, and at the end of that year published it. Although the chief musical motives presented themselves to him as he proceeded with the work, the finishing of the musical fabric was a matter of five years. Its substance was established in a detailed sketch, finished in April, 1879. He had already completed and orchestrated the prelude, and had it performed at his Bayreuth home, Wahnfried, on Christmas Day, 1878, by the Meiningen Court Orchestra, which the Duke of Meiningen had placed at his disposition to allow him to give his wife, Frau Cosima Wagner, a surprise upon the anniversary of her birth, which falls upon that day.

The second act occupied Wagner till the autumn of the next year; by the following spring the third act was finished — all was, however, only in the form of a detailed sketch. The task of the instrumentation still remained to be done; it was an exhausting task, which occupied him for nearly three years, from the winter of 1878 to the beginning of 1882. It was much interrupted by failing health, and the visits to Italy by which he sought to restore it. His friends have put on record the extraordinary fastidiousness with which he performed this part of the labor. The assignment of a theme or a figure to such and such an instrument, was the subject of long meditation on his part. Everything must have a definite object, a particular significance. How deliberately he

worked is seen by the long intervals that separated the completion of the several acts. Much of the work was done during the visits to Italy.

Progress on it was also interrupted by the writing of numerous essays and treatises on various musical, æsthetic and philosophical matters with which he was concerned, swelling the already great mass of literary works that had come from his pen. The finishing touches were put upon "Parsifal" in January, 1882.

Already, however, preparations for the first performance had been going forward. In Italy Wagner had met the Russian painter, Paul Joukowsky, with whom he had worked out the details of the stage settings, the architectural style of the Castle of the Grail, and Klingsor's magic stronghold, the landscape effects, the Oriental splendor of the magic garden, the costumes and accessories of all sorts. Then followed the preliminary rehearsals with the singers, active formulation of plans with machinists and experts in stage management, all the work of preparation in detail, even before the score was finished. In six months the work was ready for its production.

THE FIRST PERFORMANCE.

The first performance took place on July 26, 1882, in the Festival Theatre at Bayreuth, which was then reopened to the public for the first time since the memorable production of "Der Ring des Nibelungen," in 1876. This performance, and the one next following it on July 28, were reserved

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THE WOOD BY THE LAKE

Act I, Scene 1

for the members of the Wagner Societies; the third and the thirteen succeeding performances — there were sixteen in all — were open to the public. The occasion was of an importance to the musical world comparable to that of the first "Nibelung" performances; and, like those, the first representations of "Parsifal" were thronged with musicians, critics and amateurs from all over the world. After the manner of Bayreuth, several of the personages in the cast was represented by two or three different artists in rotation. The casts at the first performances were as follows:

Amfortas	Reichmann / Fuchs
Titurel	Kindermann
Gurnemanz	Scaria / Siehr
Parsifal	Gudehus / Winkelmann / Jaeger
Klingsor	Hill
Kundry	Materna / Malten / Marianne Brandt

Conductors, Hermann Levi, Franz Fischer.

The first performance of "Parsifal" outside of Bayreuth — disregarding various representations that were given in Münich in the strictest privacy before King Ludwig II. — was in New York at the Metropolitan Opera House, on December 24, 1903. A long controversy had preceded the production, after the manager, Heinrich Conried, had announced his plans in regard to it. There was an attempt to stop it by legal means, on the part

of the Wagner heirs, which failed in the courts. There was discussion of the propriety of producing the work in New York on the ground of sacrilege in the stage representation of a character so nearly resembling Christ as Parsifal; of certain incidents taken from the life of Christ, as the bathing and anointing of Parsifal's feet by the repentant Kundry, his baptizing of her, his anointing by Gurnemanz, and of the Eucharistic feast in the castle of the Grail. There was question of the æsthetic propriety of taking the work away from the special surroundings of Bayreuth for which Wagner had intended it; and of the ethical propriety of appropriating it, even with the permission of the courts and of the copyright law. The interest in the production, however, was very great. Twelve performances were given in this season, the last being on April 23, 1904; all were attended by enormous audiences. The cast was as follows:

Amfortas	Van Rooy
Titurel	Journet
Gurnemanz	Blass
Parsifal	Burgstaller
Klingsor	Goritz
Kundry	Ternina

Conductor, Alfred Hertz.

In three performances Miss Marion Weed took the part of Kundry in place of Mme. Ternina.

THE SOURCES OF THE DRAMA.

Wagner and Tennyson alone in modern times have found in the legends of the Holy Grail ma-

terials for great works of art, which they have embodied in "Lohengrin" and "Parsifal," and in "The Idylls of the King," respectively. These legends take us back across the whole length and breadth of mediæval Europe. If the researches of the comparative mythologists have led them to the truth, the Grail legends recede still further, in their primitive forms, into that dawn of the Aryan civilization whence came all the stories that have entered deeply into the life of the ruling races of the western world. Like so many others that antedated the beginnings of Christianity, they have been turned from their original significance to the purposes of the Church; have taken on the guise of religion and have been identified with Christianity as an expression of the mediæval spirit and attitude toward religion.

The ramifications of the Grail legends, their sources and the various forms which they have assumed, make a study by itself. So far as Wagner's work is concerned, an examination of the forms in which the legends are moulded in the mediæval narratives is sufficient to indicate the sources from which he derived his material, without tracing the interesting literary peregrinations and amalgamations of the several myths and stories that were finally merged together in these legends.

Wagner's treatment of the Grail legends is quite comparable with his treatment of the "Nibelung" legends. From the vast detailed picture of the "Nibelungenlied" and the Norse Eddas, he abstracted the comparatively broad, simple outlines of his "Nibelung" dramas. In the same way,

from the bewildering complexities of the Grail legends and the stories of Arthur, he drew the material of "Parsifal." In both cases he not only wrought a closely knit and logical dramatic structure, in which he delineated the workings of elemental forces in human nature, but made them the vehicle of a philosophy of life and of a profound ethical teaching. In "Parsifal" he has united and condensed some of the most significant features of the Grail stories, not hesitating to change, to select and eliminate, to rearrange and to shift the perspective and relative significance of various personages, events and underlying ideas; to add and to develop according to his own dramatic needs, yet preserving the general form and spirit, and breathing into it all the new and higher significance that he wished to express.

Scholars have found that in its original form the Grail was a pagan talisman, and that it was transformed into a Christian symbol, with a vast number of other ideas, after the conversion of Europe to Christianity. They find in the ultimate form of the Grail legends an amalgamation of two different sets of stories. There were the Arthurian stories, British, Celtic in origin, and developed in a large body of literature in England in the twelfth century, in which the Grail did not at first appear. The most important of these deals with Peredur, whose adventures were in many ways identical with those of Perceval in the French stories. In France was developed the idea of the Grail, at first a vessel in which was offered a draught of wisdom or of youth, and then, later, a

Christian symbol. Of this there were two conceptions; one that it was a stone struck by the Archangel Michael from the crown of Lucifer which fell to earth. In the later versions it is the sacred vessel used by Christ at the Last Supper, in which Joseph of Arimathæa caught the blood from the side of the wounded Saviour on the cross, and which thereby became a talisman of wondrous power. The part it plays in the stories is various; but through them all its quest was one of the chief duties and highest ambitions of chivalry.

According to one of the legends it was brought to Great Britain by Joseph of Arimathæa and deposited at Glastonbury. This one Tennyson followed in "The Idylls of the King;" and thus he speaks of the Grail and its lot:

> The cup, the cup itself, from which our Lord
> Drank at the last sad supper with his own,
> This from the blessed land of Aromat —
> After the day of darkness when the dead
> Went wandering on Moriah — the good saint,
> Arimathæan Joseph, journeying, brought
> To Glastonbury, where the winter thorn
> Blossoms at Christmas, mindful of our Lord.

According to another legend, the one which Wagner adopted, it was given, with the sacred spear, by angels into the keeping of Titurel, son of the King of Cappadocia. He built a sanctuary for it on Montsalvat in Galicia, Spain, where it was guarded by a body of knights, pure in word and deed, whose lives were devoted to its service. Among its talismanic properties is the power of feeding and sustaining its possessors, as it did

Joseph of Arimathæa, lying in prison for forty-two years; and as it did the Knights of the Grail. Another is that of prophecy; another that of choosing its defenders; it foretells the coming of the knightly rescuer, and appointed him to the task.

The sacred spear that is closely connected with it, is the spear with which the Roman soldier Longinus pierced the side of Christ as He hung upon the cross. It is an object of equal adoration with the Grail and also a talisman of supernatural power. With the Grail, it came into the keeping of Titurel.

Perceval or Parzival is the evolution of a figure that goes back to the misty antiquity of the race. He is the "Great Fool" of a series of British and Teutonic folk tales — a lad of noble lineage sent by his widowed mother to save him from his wicked uncle, to be brought up, unknown, by a kitchen wench in a forest, in ignorance of his own name, unlearned in the affairs of life. In the Christianization of this legend the qualities of this Great Fool are given a spiritual significance; he is guileless, pure, as well as simple, a fool; and hence he is chosen for the doing of divine deeds; his enlightenment comes through pity. In the earliest form of the legend he is not connected with the Grail at all, but was brought into relation with it in later transformations and consolidations of the two stories.

There are two principal literary versions of the story of the hero of the Grail that have come down to us: one the "Conte del Graal" of Chrétien de Troyes, a French poet of the twelfth cen-

tury, relating the adventures of Perceval; the other the "Parzival" of Wolfram von Eschenbach, who came a little later in the twelfth century, the German minnesinger. Chrétien's romance was left unfinished; as to the indebtedness to him of Wolfram there has been great dispute. Wolfram speaks slightingly of his predecessor, whose version of the legend he declares to be distorted, and asserts that his own version is founded on that of a Provençal poet named Kiot, who in turn obtained it from Arabic sources. In certain parts the two differ greatly in detail; but they are informed with the same spirit of knightly chivalry. Wolfram's, the completest and most beautiful version of the legend, is the immediate source of Wagner's drama, though he has also taken certain elements from the other. Wolfram's poem is about equally divided between the adventures of Parzival and of Gawain; and some of the latter, though not connected with the Grail at all, have been incorporated by Wagner into his work. Wolfram also describes the Grail as the jewel of Lucifer's crown; and the representation of it as the sacred vessel filled with the blood of Christ, Wagner has taken from Chrétien.

In Wolfram's poem, Parzival is the son of Herzeleide, a widow, who brings him up in ignorance of everything relating to chivalry, that he may be spared the fate of his father, the knight Gamuret. But one day he sees three knights riding by, and follows them, in his simple-minded ignorance, dressed as he is in fool's clothing. He reaches King Arthur's court; wins a suit of armor by killing

a knight who insults him; sets out again and comes to the castle of an old knight, Gurnemans de Graharz (the prototype of Wagner's Gurnemanz), who instructs him in many things. Again he goes forth and wanders from castle to castle; he aids the people of a beleaguered city, and marries their queen, Kundwiramur, by whom he has twin sons, one of them being Lohengrin — "Loherangrin" in the orthography of Wolfram. He sets out again to seek his mother, of whose death he is ignorant. His adventures now take him to a great castle, peopled with knights, where the master, King Anfortas, reclines suffering upon a couch. A noble damsel brings in an object of wondrous brilliancy, the Grail, which provides a feast for the company; a squire bears a bleeding lance and Anfortas presents Parzival with a magnificent sword. The simple-minded youth is lost in wonder at these marvels; but remembering the teachings of Gurnemans, not to speak too much nor to ask too many questions, he makes no inquiry as to their meaning. Upon this question, it seems, depends the recovery of Anfortas, now indefinitely postponed by Parzival's failure to propound it. In the morning he departs, but as he goes, a squire abuses him for his stupidity in not asking the question as to the nature and function of the Grail. He returns to the court of Arthur and is admitted to the Order of the Round Table. There Kondrie, the sorceress, in her turn overwhelms him with reproaches for his stupid neglect in questioning. Again he goes forth in despair, having renounced the Round Table through

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ON THE WAY TO THE TEMPLE
(TRANSFORMATION PANORAMA)

ACT I

the conviction of his own unworthiness. He experiences various adventures, — among them the meeting with the pilgrims, who remind him of the day of Good Friday, the episode which in 1857 made so deep an impression on Wagner. He arrives, finally, at the cell of a hermit who instructs him in the story of the Grail and the bleeding spear. Anfortas, he is told, is suffering the punishment of lust, having received a wound from a poisoned spear which cannot be cured until a knight shall arrive and of his own initiative ask about the king's sufferings; and in the meantime the sight of the Grail prolongs his agony by keeping him alive. Parzival hears his condemnation thus again, but bears his humiliation in silence. Then he departs, and finally reaches once more the Grail castle. Asking this time the fateful question, he releases Anfortas from his misery, receives the crown, is joined by his wife and his twin sons, and rules gloriously.

An episode of the story as told by Wolfram that has supplied Wagner with one of the characters of his drama must be mentioned, though it occupies no place in the story of Parzival's adventures. It relates to Gawan, another of the knights of the Round Table, who has also gone in quest of the Grail, and who, in his life of errantry, reaches the Castle of Perdition, of which Klinschor, the magician, is lord. There he has imprisoned many Christian knights and dames, whom Gawan frees by undergoing numerous terrifying trials. In a very different shape Wagner has utilized part of the idea in "Parsifal."

The narratives of Chrétien and Wolfram are long, discursive and complex. Only the most significant features of the latter's have been mentioned here, those bearing most directly upon Wagner's drama. How he possessed himself of the most pregnant, the ones most fitted to form the cornerstones of his dramatic structure; how he exalted and transfigured the story and made it the vehicle of profound and beautiful symbolism — these things are among the marvellous achievements of his genius. From the multitudinous details of these mediæval stories Wagner has disentangled a few characters, a few incidents, from which to construct his music drama. He has followed the mediæval conception of the nature and function of the Grail, of the sacred spear with which Longinus pierced the side of the dying Saviour. But there have been infinite changes, suppressions, simplifications, broadenings, accentuations of one and another trait. Most of all there has been a great transformation in the spirit and significance of it. The romantic mediæval narrative has been turned into a drama of deep ethical import, representing a philosophy. The characters embody types of humanity, and their actions are eloquent of deeper things than those that go on in the narratives of the mediæval storytellers, beautiful as these are.

Part II.

THE STORY OF WAGNER'S PARSIFAL

Parsifal, in Wagner's drama, is the posthumous son of Gamuret, a knight slain in battle, and Herzeleide, who brings him up as a simpleton in the woods and moorland wastes, to keep him from all knowledge of knighthood and a fate like that of his father, slain in Arabia. But one day he sees a cavalcade of men-at-arms on horseback, follows them, and after many wanderings, comes to the domain belonging to the Castle of the Grail. This, according to Wagner, is in "the northern mountains of Gothic Spain." It was built by Titurel to guard the holy vessel and the sacred spear confided to him by divine messengers. Waxing old, he intrusted their keeping to his son, Amfortas. On the southern slope of the same mountains, facing Arabian Spain, is the magic castle of Klingsor. An aspirant for membership in the band of unsullied Grail warders who dwell under Amfortas's rule, Klingsor was rejected for his impurity of life, and for his self-mutilation in the effort to arrive at a chastity which his strength of will could not attain; whereupon he devoted himself to the damnable arts of magic, seeking to corrupt the knights by the seductions of his magic garden, thronged by alluring maidens, and to gain possession of the Grail. Amfortas, once, on an expedition to crush this hostile and dangerous neighbor, succumbed

to the allurements of "a maid of fearful beauty" in that garden; and as he lay in her arms, he was bereft of the sacred lance by Klingsor, who with it inflicted upon him a wound that never heals.

This maid is none other than Kundry, a strange being leading a twofold life, sometimes in the thrall of Klingsor's magic, of dazzling beauty, then serving as his instrument of evil; at other times she is of wild and savage mien, repentantly ministering to the Grail knights, though they fear her and dislike her.

The first act shows us a glade in a shadowy forest surrounding the Grail Castle. Day is dawning, and the hale old knight Gurnemanz arouses the esquires who are sleeping under the trees. They hear the solemn call to prayer from afar, and all kneel and pray. Amfortas, the suffering king, is about to be carried to his bath in the lake hard by, and approaches, reclining on a litter, attended by knights and esquires. Then comes, too, Kundry, a terrible figure upon a madly flying horse, to bring an Arabian balsam in the hope of giving Amfortas relief. The king is borne in on his way to the bath, bewailing his unceasing agony, and longing for the "guileless fool, through pity enlightened," who is, according to the prophecy of the Grail, to give him surcease of suffering. He passes on, after acknowledging Kundry's service, who lies motionless on her face, "like a wild beast." In a conversation with the young esquires which follows, Gurnemanz informs them of the significance of what they have seen, and establishes the posture of circumstances upon which

the drama is based. He tells of the Grail and of the sacred spear delivered into Titurel's charge by angels; of Klingsor's vain attempt to gain admission to the chosen band of pure Grail Warders; of his baleful machinations to corrupt the knights in his magic garden; of Amfortas and his sin.

Gurnemanz's discourse is interrupted by cries of horror from the knights and esquires. A wild swan has been wounded with an arrow. The culprit is brought in, listens to Gurnemanz's reproaches, then breaks his bow and throws it away in an access of remorse and pity. "I knew not 'twas wrong," says he. It is Parsifal. Asked by Gurnemanz who is his father, who is his mother, he knows not. As to his own name he knows only that once he had many, but can remember none now. Something he must know, as Gurnemanz tells him; it proves to be his mother's name, Herzeleide, which he pronounces, only to learn from Kundry that she is dead in his absence. He is violently overcome by the tidings, and springs upon her in a rage. Gurnemanz restrains him; he grows faint, is revived by water which Kundry runs to fetch from a neighboring spring. Kundry feels herself overcome with ominous weariness; gripped by terror, knowing that her time has come to serve the wicked Klingsor, she staggers into a thicket and sinks down unconscious.

To refresh the youth, and with an inkling that he may be the guileless fool long expected, Gurnemanz leads Parsifal to the castle to partake of the sacred nourishment furnished by the Grail to all who are pure. That he has the shadow of a

hope that the deliverer may be at hand is indicated by his words to Parsifal:

Let me to the holy Feast then conduct thee,
For, an thou'rt pure,
Surely the Grail will feed and refresh thee.

Parsifal asks, "What is the Grail?" to which Gurnemanz replies:

I may not say;
But if to serve it thou art bidden,
Knowledge of it will not be hidden.
And lo! —
Methinks I know thee now indeed.

They set out for the Grail Castle. Their progress is a strange one; they only appear to walk, and the scenery slowly moves past them. As Parsifal says:

I scarcely move
Yet see that far I've gone.

Gurnemanz's explanation is a metaphysical riddle:

My son, thou see'st
Here Space and Time are one.

They pass through strange rocky galleries, under cliffs, along mysterious darkling passages. They arrive finally at a mighty hall, lighted from the dome high above. Chimes are heard. It is the time for the solemn unveiling and adoration of the Grail. There are two long tables spread with cups. The knights enter in a solemn procession, each taking his place at the board. Amfortas is brought in on his litter and helped up to a raised couch in the middle, behind an altar. Boys precede him, bearing the purple-draped

shrine of the Holy Grail, which is placed upon the altar before him. The voice of the aged Titurel is heard, calling upon his son to do his duty and uncover the sacred vessel. Amfortas breaks out into passionate lamentation, bewailing the anguish caused him by the ceremonial, and beseeching the divine pity. The Grail is uncovered, and the hall is shrouded in a mysterious gloom. Then of a sudden a blinding ray of light shoots down upon it, and it glows with an intense crimson lustre. All kneel. The words of the communion service are intoned, and Amfortas, with brightened mien, raises the Grail, waves it gently to and fro, while all cast their gaze reverently upon it. Then the gloom of the hall is lightened, the glow of the Grail wanes, and the esquires distribute the bread and wine with which the power of the holy vessel has provided them. All sit down to the repast, including Gurnemanz, who beckons to Parsifal to come and partake of it. All this time, however, he has stood as one dumbfounded, silent and motionless, nor does he change his mien as Amfortas is borne out again upon the litter, and the knights slowly file after him. Gurnemanz turns to him roughly:

> Why standest thou here?
> Wist thou what thou saw'st?

Parsifal shakes his head, still speechless. "Then thou art nothing but a fool," cries the old man in bitter disappointment, and bids him begone:

> Leave all our swans for the future alone
> And seek thyself, gander, a goose!

As Gurnemanz turns away, a clear voice from above is heard repeating the prophecy of the Grail:

By pity enlightened
The Guileless Fool.

In the second act we see, first, the magic laboratory of Klingsor's castle, a place of fantastic outlines illumined with a dim, unholy light. The wizard is laying his spell upon the unwilling Kundry, summoning her to the task of seducing Parsifal, who is approaching the castle and whom he sees in his magic mirror, laying about him as he comes, disabling the castle guards and mounting the garden wall. Change of scene: The whole castle sinks; and there rises in its place the magic garden full of tropical vegetation and a luxurious wealth of flowers, a place of allurement, glowing with light and color. At the back, a wall, upon which stands Parsifal, gazing in astonishment at the scene before him. A throng of beautiful damsels appear in haste, as if suddenly disturbed from sleep. They bewail the loss of their lovers, the castle guards, whom Parsifal has so quickly disposed of, and call upon the rosy youth to come and play with them. Parsifal descends among them and listens to their chatter and their endearments. One after another they slip away and return in the guise of living flowers. Pressing around Parsifal, they ply him with their blandishments. At first amused, then half angry at their insistence, he turns to make his escape, when he hears his name called by Kundry's voice:

"Parsifal — tarry!"

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KLINGSOR'S CASTLE

ACT II, SCENE I

It is the first time it has been pronounced. Parsifal stops short: "Parsifal?" he says; "so once my mother called me." Kundry, still invisible, beseeches him to stay. Finally she is seen through the branches — but how transformed in appearance! Now she is a young woman of exquisite beauty, clad in a drapery of shimmering iridescence, of orchid-like color, showing the glint of emeralds and fiery opals. Reclining upon a flowery couch, she is a figure of wondrous charm. She calls him again by his name: "Fal Parsi" — so Wagner attempts to derive the name "Parsifal" from Arabic words meaning "foolish pure one;" she tells him of his mother, Herzeleide; of his own babyhood, of her care for him, of her grief at his departure and of her death. Parsifal, terribly affected, sinks down at Kundry's feet overpowered, overwhelmed with self-reproach. The enchantress begins her wiles; wreathing her arm about his neck she comforts him; tells him that confession is absolution: "Transgression when owned is quickly ended." She bids him find consolation in love — such love as his father Gamuret had for Herzeleide. She bows her head over his and presses her lips on his in a long kiss — a benediction from his mother, is her specious name for it — the first kiss of love.

Parsifal starts up in intense terror, pressing his hand to his heart as if in agony. He bursts out in an apostrophe to Amfortas: the spear-wound, he feels it burning and bleeding in his own heart; love's delirium seizes his senses with sinful longings. Then he sees the image of the Grail,

throws himself upon his knees, calls upon the Saviour, the Lord. From Kundry's kiss he has received enlightenment; he understands all now — the cause of the king's downfall, the baleful results wrought by his sin. He spurns the enchantress from him, bidding her begone. Kundry, bewildered and beseeching, asks him

> So hath then my kiss
> With world-wide vision endowed thee?
> If my full love should embrace thee
> Surely to godhead 'twould raise thee.

Parsifal offers her love and redemption if she will but show him the way to Amfortas — the pure love that leads to redemption. In rage Kundry declares that he shall never find the way; and that the curse of Christ that once punished her for laughter, gives her might — once again she pleads for a single hour in his embrace, then the pathway he shall find. "Begone, unhappy woman!" is Parsifal's only reply. Kundry in a wild frenzy calls out for all the pathways to be barred; cries to Klingsor for help, curses all the roads that Parsifal may travel, and bans his search for Amfortas:

> For fledst thou from hence and foundest
> All the ways of the world,
> The one that thou seek'st
> That pathway ne'er shalt thou find
> Here — I curse them to thee:
> Wander, wander! —
> Thou whom I trust,
> Thee will I give as his guide!

With these words she delivers him over to the tender mercies of Klingsor. Klingsor appears

upon the castle wall with the sacred lance of which he robbed Amfortas. He hurls it at the youth; but the holy weapon stops, poised harmlessly above his head. Parsifal grasps it, makes the sign of the cross with it, and Klingsor and all his works disappear, the castle crashing to ruins, the garden withering to a desert, the damsels lying as shrivelled flowers upon the ground. Parsifal mounts the garden wall again and disappears, turning to the prostrate Kundry with the words:

> Thou knowest
> Where only we shall meet again.

With the parting of the curtain upon the third act, we are again in the Grail's domain, amid a flowery meadow in springtime. It is Good Friday. Years have passed. Gurnemanz, now very old, emerges from a hermit's hut. He sees Kundry rigid, almost lifeless, in a thicket; drags her out, restores her to consciousness and strength. She is again the penitent Grail servant, pale, sad, with flowing black hair and a rough brown robe. With the one word "service — service!" she sets about her self-appointed tasks. Now emerges from the neighboring wood a stranger knight, clad in black armor, his helmet closed, his spear lowered, advancing slowly with bowed head. Responding not at all to Gurnemanz's greeting, he lays down his arms and silently prays before them. Gurnemanz recognizes him as the fool whom once he dismissed in anger from the Castle of the Grail; he recognizes the spear; he presages the coming of the long-hoped-for deliverer. Parsifal rises

from his prayer, greets Gurnemanz with gratitude to heaven that he has found him again. He tells him of his many experiences, of his ardent desire to find again the Grail and the suffering king. Long has he wandered through error and suffering, and now a new hope comes to him that he has reached his goal — or is it a new deception? All is changed, he thinks, in those domains. His way lies toward him whose sore lament he once listened to, an awestruck fool; him for whose healing he deems himself ordained; but always has the wished-for path been denied him. He has wandered blindly, driven ever onward by Kundry's curse through countless distresses, battles and conflicts, and away from the true road, though well he knew it, his main care being to keep inviolate and undefiled the sacred lance that has come into his keeping — for that which gleams and glows before him is none other than the Grail's holy spear.

Gurnemanz bursts out into an ejaculation of wonder and thanksgiving; then he narrates how Amfortas has refused to perform his office of Grail Warder and exhibit the sacred vessel to the knights, hoping thereby to end his agony with his life. The holy meal is denied them, and "common viands must content them." Their strength has wasted, and no longer is the spiritless, headless band summoned to holy warfare. Titurel, deprived of the Grail's sustaining power, is dead; Gurnemanz himself has hidden in the wood, waiting for his time to come.

Hearing these things, Parsifal bursts out into

passionate self-reproach as being himself the cause of all this woe, and is like to sink into unconsciousness, but for Gurnemanz's support and the water that Kundry brings to sprinkle his face. Shall he be guided straight to Amfortas? asks Parsifal. Yes, is Gurnemanz's reply; for that day they are summoned to the castle for the obsequies of Titurel; and once more then the Grail will be uncovered — Amfortas will again fulfil his long neglected office to sanctify his sovereign father and to expiate his own sin. Gurnemanz leads Parsifal to the edge of a spring, and, with Kundry, removes his armor; and after Kundry has bathed his feet, dips water in the hollow of his hand and sprinkles the knight's head, blessing him. In the meantime Kundry draws a golden flask of ointment from her bosom, anoints Parsifal's feet and wipes them with her hair. Gurnemanz takes the flask and anoints his head, proclaiming him king. Parsifal fulfills his first duty by baptizing Kundry and bidding her believe on the Redeemer. Her curse is broken, and she weeps bitterly.

Turning around, Parsifal gazes with gentle rapture on the woods and fields, remarking upon their beauty. It is Good Friday's spell, answers Gurnemanz; the tears of repentant sinners sprinkle them with holy moisture and bless them.

Gurnemanz then craves leave to lead Parsifal to the Grail Castle, after dressing him in the mantle of the Grail knights. The three set out together. Again "space is changed to time," and they are translated through the intervening distance with scarce a movement. They come to the

great hall of the castle as before, amid the pealing of the bells; see the knights enter, bearing Titurel's corpse upon a bier; see Amfortas brought in upon a litter. There are this time no tables set for the holy meal. Again Amfortas is called upon to uncover the Grail, but he refuses, and tearing open his wound, summons them to plunge their swords into it, deep, to the hilt, to end his suffering.

Thereupon advances Parsifal with the outstretched spear touching Amfortas's side with the point and saying:

> One weapon only serves:
> The one that struck
> Can staunch thy wounded side.

Amfortas, healed, is irradiated with holy rapture. Parsifal announces his kingship, as the one foretold by the oracle, the Guileless Fool enlightened by pity. He stretches forth the spear, the point glowing with rosy light. He uncovers the Grail and holds it aloft; it, too, is illumined by the crimson radiance as before. A flood of light is poured from above, and a white dove flutters down, poising itself above his head. Kundry, gazing at him, sinks lifeless to the ground. In soft voices all proclaim:

> Wondrous work of mercy:
> Redemption to the Redeemer.

THE CHARACTERS OF THE DRAMA

The character of Parsifal is depicted in broad and unmistakable lines in Wagner's drama; but there are innumerable subtle touches by which its

details are accentuated. Of knightly birth, he has been brought up in a way effectively to keep him from the knowledge, the *savoir faire*, the point of view of his class. He is a simpleton, truly, in his profound ignorance of all the world holds. He is uncouth, untaught in the ways of men, and so presents himself at the outset. He is ignorant of the law, as of all else, and hence of sin; a creature of undisciplined impulse. He shares not at all in Gurnemanz's horror at the killing of animals: "For sure he killed the swan — whatever goes flying he hits;" and there speaks the young wood-roving barbarian. He is ignorant even of the difference between good and evil till Kundry tells him that the giants and caitiffs who attacked him were evil, and Gurnemanz that his mother was good. Kundry's sneering and abrupt revelation to him of his mother's death rouses in him first an unthinking fury against the bearer of the ill tidings as the cause of them. His mental processes are as those of a child. But he responds at once to the first appeal to pity. Gurnemanz's demonstration of the heinousness of his sin in killing a harmless wild swan causes in him a complete revulsion of feeling, as he breaks his bow and casts it away. Thus appears at the very outset the first indication of the cardinal trait of his character. His mother's death comes to him as the first experience of the sad reality of sorrow. On hearing Amfortas's cry of agony before the Grail, Parsifal clutches violently at his heart; but this new experience of pity, unnoted by Gurnemanz, has left him speechless; he has no words to

voice his new sensation to the knight who sees only what is on the surface, and indignantly spurns him in his disappointment. His emotions when beset by the flower maidens are those only of amusement and of annoyance at their importunities. He does not understand them. Kundry's first utterance of his name revives the recollection of how his mother called him, the remembrance of the one love, the one tenderness he has known; and at the same time his remorse is kindled at his forgetfulness and senseless folly. Through that tenderness and that remorse, Kundry works to awaken him to pity, and seeks to lead him on thereby to passionate love. The mingling of carnal temptation with the purity of filial love is distasteful, and has been much criticised, but it is a bold conception and masterfully carried out. The awakened pity brings results different from Kundry's anticipation. It brings full enlightenment, the complete development of what has been germinating in his soul under our eyes. It brings knowledge of good and evil, and of the inevitable consequences of the sin to which Kundry invites him. As he struggles with the storm of sinful emotions that rages within him, all is revealed to him at once — the sin of Amfortas, the cause of his agony, the personal responsibility of the sinner, the guise in which temptation came. He sees the sacred cup, and he feels the "thrill of redemption's rapture." All he thinks of is to rescue and to save. At last the guileless fool has come into birthright of his soul, fullness of knowledge, of pity, of renunciation. His adventures

thereafter, prove and confirm his right to the title that is awaiting him in the Castle of the Grail. Through error and suffering lies his pathway thither. His attainment of the good means renunciation of sensual delight, a conquest of the most formidable forces of evil that beset men's souls. He tastes of bitterness, battles continuously for the right, toils for the triumph of the right in the fulfillment of a high and heaven-sent mission. He comes again to the Grail Castle as one cleansed by fire and suffering.

In Kundry, Wagner has drawn one of the subtlest and most complex characters of dramatic literature. In the reality of her nature, in its essence, she has little to do with the characters upon which he modelled her in the old legends; but in her outward form she is an amalgamation of figures in Chrétien's and Wolfram's recitals. From her own words we learn that she is a woman who had mocked the Saviour as He carried the burden of the cross to Calvary and was condemned therefor to endless wandering and to endless laughter, a kind of Wandering Jewess. Klingsor calls her Nameless Woman, primeval She-Devil, Rose of Hell, Herodias once, Gundryggia the Valkyrie once, now Kundry. Gurnemanz suggests that as the wild and sullen messenger of the Grail she may be atoning for sins in some former life. She is thus, through a suggestion of the Buddhistic philosophy, a reincarnation of many strange elements of wickedness and lust. She lives a life of sin, and a life of repentance. She seeks salvation by serving the Grail, and doing works of penance;

she is filled with a longing to meet again a compassionate being who shall release her from her torment by the power of redeeming love. But her sin always rises up to thwart her; for through it she is subject to the thrall of Klingsor's magic, and when this is upon her she is the unwilling instrument for the seduction of men; unwilling — yet when this side of her nature is incarnate, she is of insensate lust, and seeks through the unholiest means to gain the love that she hopes will be her salvation. Struggle against this magic thrall as she will, she must always yield, when the time comes for her to yield. The tragedy of her existence is solved by the strength and the all-embracing compassion of Parsifal. In her different guises she presents a strangely diverse figure. In the first act she is a wild creature with eyes now blazing fierily, now fixed and dull, roughly clad, rude and abrupt in speech, yet devoted to the service of the Grail and its king. She struggles in fearful agony and with blood-curdling shrieks to resist Klingsor as he conjures her for his evil purposes, taunts him fiercely as he boasts of the cause of his power over her; but all her struggles are vain. When she reappears in the guise of the Temptress in the magic garden, it is with all the conviction, all the equipment of the accomplished wanton. At first she reckons only upon a kind of shy embarrassment on the part of the innocent youth. But when her kiss kindles in him the fire of sensual desire, it also reveals to him the meaning and the consequences of it. To Kundry's astonishment he repulses her; her feelings change

to yearning and admiration for him; she bethinks herself of her own need for pity, she desires him for herself and her own salvation, and puts her entreaties to him on that ground. She pleads for only one hour in his embraces — so she shall gain redemption and deliverance from her curse. She is now herself, not Klingsor's tool, and is putting forth her temptations on her own behoof. But Parsifal knows that that way damnation lies. To help her he is also sent; but he knows that help cannot come from the source that is the cause of her condemnation:

> The new life that shall thee deliver
> Think not thy sorrow's fount may yield —
> Salvation can thy heart know never
> Until that fount to thee is sealed.

In the third act Kundry takes on still another character; that of the grave, silent penitent, yearning, with suffering imprinted on her face, for the opportunity to serve, speaking only the one word "service," and going tranquilly about the duties of a servant. Gurnemanz finds her mien strangely altered, and rejoices that he has rescued her for salvation from the sleep of death in which he found her. She is indeed ready for it, and the final scene of the drama is but the completion of the work begun by Parsifal through his resistance to her wiles. Tearless she is, till he baptizes her, and thereby breaks the curse that has so long held her in its ban; and then is fulfilled the redemption that was begun upon her in the magic garden.

Gurnemanz shares some of the lovableness that Wagner put into that other old man of his creation, Hans Sachs. He has a touch of humor, through his garrulousness, his rugged strength, his vigorous uprightness. There are kindliness, sympathy, beneath his rough exterior. He is not prescient nor far-seeing, nor can his mind take devious paths; but he is all devotion to the Grail and to Amfortas. His humor twinkles through his rough summons to the sleeping watchers at the very beginning of the drama:

> Hey, ho, wood-warders twain!
> Sleep-warders I call ye!
> Come, wake at least with the morning!

When he is questioning Parsifal in vain to find out who he is, he ends with the dry sarcasm:

> Declare then what thou knowest:
> Of something must thou have knowledge!

And when after the disclosure of all the Grail mysteries, the youth has nothing to say for himself, not even a question to ask, the old man in his disappointment pushes him rudely from the castle with his rough jest:

> Leave all our swans for the future alone,
> And seek thyself, gander, a goose!

While he is all horror for the wickedness that has been the undoing of Amfortas, he has a good word for Kundry, whom the young esquires fear and distrust. She has nothing in common with them, says Gurnemanz; but when they need help in time of danger she breathes zeal through their

ranks; and if she is under a curse, it may be that she is living there to atone for sins unforgiven in her former existence by serving the knights through her good actions. He does not suspect her connection with Amfortas's fall, for he even asks her where she was with her help, when that disaster befell. In the last act his age and sorrow have brought greater gentleness and a chastened spirit. His attitude toward Parsifal is then of devout expectancy, and even his chiding of the helmeted knight for intruding, armed, into the Grail's domain is of the mildest. Through that act he thankfully takes the part of the chosen agent to consecrate the Deliverer and to lead him to the ailing king whom he is to supersede.

Sympathy for Amfortas does not spring from the listener's heart. His suffering makes him an egotist, and he is engrossed with it and with the longing for deliverance so long delayed. Wagner makes him speak with an eloquence of lamentation that has few parallels in music; and while the music is moving, profoundly expressive of his corroding anguish, he comes before us as scarcely more than the representative of the effect of sin upon man, the articulate utterance of humanity's rue and yearning for relief, a picture of his kind, seared and weakened with the consequences of sin. As for his place in the community of the Grail knights, Wagner himself has written:

> The significance of the king of this knightly company we sought in the original meaning of the word "King," as the head of the community who was chosen for the guarding of the Grail; he was to be distinguished from the other

knights in nothing except the mystic importance of the high function attributed to him alone, as well as his long incomprehended suffering.

Klingsor, the malignant agency that has brought woe into the domain of the Grail, only briefly appears in the course of the drama itself; but the effects of his baleful power persist and are felt from the beginning till they are annihilated by the coming of Parsifal at the very end. He is that pagan with whom paganism encroaches upon the Grail's domain — his abode is "rankest pagan land," as Gurnemanz tells the young esquires. Revenge and cupidity are his controlling motives; magic, working through the basest means of lust and unholy desires, his method. His machinations are directed toward the capture of the Grail for himself, through the destruction of its guardians, and toward vengeance for his rejection from the band of the Grail Knights, to membership in which he aspired. His malignant, mocking nature is revealed in his speeches to Kundry at his evocation of her as he taunts her with the wrong she has wrought Amfortas and with his own power over her, and as he rages at her own taunting question as to his chastity. He sees the oncoming of the stripling Parsifal with glee, welcoming him to his destruction, and he watches the disaster to his own knights, his castle guardians, with cynical indifference, caring for nothing, not even the destruction of his chosen vassals, except the achievement of his own selfish ends. But his power vanishes as a noxious mist before the rays of the sun, as Parsifal turns upon him with the rescued spear.

Part III.

THE MUSIC

In none of Wagner's music dramas has he carried out his musical system with greater skill or certainty of touch than in "Parsifal." In none has he exhibited a higher mastery in the fashioning of the musical texture from leading motives, in the suggestiveness and logical completeness with which he has done it, or in the sonority, richness and mellowness of the orchestral garb with which he has clothed the score. In thematic invention the "Ring" dramas and "Die Meistersinger" may surpass it; in spontaneity it stands below "Tristan"; but the poetical beauty and subtlety of the "Parsifal" music, the expressive power with which it interprets all the characters, emotions, sufferings, aspirations, that are embodied in the drama, are surpassed in none other of Wagner's works. In none of them is the key to the understanding of all to be sought so continually in the music. As Mr. Newman has pointed out, this wonderful series of tone pictures has a veracity to which no other musician could ever have attained; his unrivalled power of conceiving life and character in terms of music is triumphantly shown in such figures as Parsifal, Kundry and Amfortas. It is the purpose of the present chapter to point out the leading motives by the use of which he has achieved these results.

I. THE PRELUDE

The Prelude is, as it were, an initiation into the sacred mysteries of which the drama is the elucidation. It at once takes us into the characteristic mood and atmosphere of the play — the mood of solemnity and reverential awe. It has been compared to the Prelude of "Lohengrin"; the poetic subjects of the two have much in common, but there is nothing of the passionate eloquence, the dramatic intensity, of the "Lohengrin" prelude in that of "Parsifal." The difference, it has been observed, resides in the more epic treatment that fills the prelude to "Parsifal" with a contemplative calm, as well as in the more solemn subject of the drama.

Wagner has explained the fundamental ideas of this prelude in a brief analytical note that he prepared for a private performance of it before King Ludwig II., at Munich, in 1880. It is as follows:[1]

"Love — Faith — Hope?"
First theme: "Love."

"Take ye my body, take my blood, in token of our love!" (Repeated in faint whispers by angel-voices.) "Take ye my blood, my body take, in memory of me!" (Again repeated in whispers.)

Second theme: "Faith."

Promise of redemption through faith. Firmly and stoutly faith declares itself, exalted, willing even in suffering. To the promise renewed Faith answers from the dimmest

[1] Richard Wagner's Prose Works, translated by William Ashton Ellis, vol. VIII., p. 388.

Copyright, 1904, by Pach Bros. KLINGSOR'S MAGIC GARDEN IN BLOOM ACT II. SCENE 2

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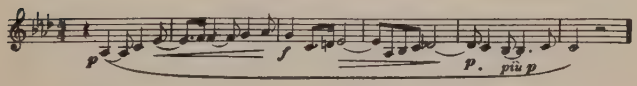
KLINGSOR'S MAGIC GARDEN IN RUINS
(TRANSFORMATION SCENE)

ACT II, SCENE 2

heights, as on the pinions of the snow-white dove, hovering downwards, usurping more and more the hearts of men, filling the world, the whole of nature with the mightiest force, then glancing up again to heaven's vault as if appeased. But once more, from out the awe of solitude throbs forth the cry of loving pity: the agony, the holy sweat of Olivet, the divine death throes of Golgotha; the body pales, the blood flows forth and glows now in the chalice with the heavenly glow of blessing, shedding on all that lives and languishes the grace of ransom won by Love. For him who, — fearful rue for sin at heart — must quail before the godlike vision of the Grail, for Amfortas, sinful keeper of the halidom, we are made ready: will redemption heal the gnawing torments of his soul? Once more we hear the promise and — we hope!

The prelude opens with the motive of *The Last Supper*, intoned in unison by the violins and wood wind without accompaniment:

I. THE LAST SUPPER

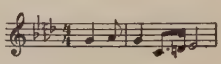


The solemnity of this motive at once seizes upon the mind of the listener and grips it tight. It is used frequently in the drama, symbolizing the association of the Grail Knights, the holy purposes for which it exists. Besides its simplicity as an unaccompanied melody, may be noted its syncopated character, and its undetermined tonality, containing in two contiguous measures the D natural foreign to the key (A flat), in which it appears, followed in the next measure by the D flat.

It is to be observed that two fragments of this

theme are frequently employed by themselves, the first being used as a voicing of the Saviour's cry of anguish, thus:

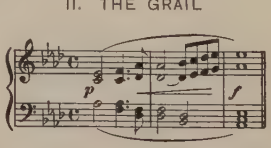
THE SAVIOUR'S CRY OF ANGUISH



The second, the clause immediately following it, is the representative of the sacred spear, and as such is given below, as Theme IV.

Soft arpeggios in the violins follow the first enunciation of this theme; then the theme is repeated, to their accompaniment, in the higher octave. It comes again in minor and a minor third higher. More soft arpeggios; the second theme then enters, the theme of *The Grail*: (page 4, system 4) [1] —

II. THE GRAIL



only three measures long, but rising in a soaring uplift of the harmony to a forte, played upon trombones and trumpets. This, like the preceding, is frequently repeated to characterize the worship of the Grail, which is one of the cornerstones of the drama. There is hardly a scene in

[1] The references are to the simplified editions of the Piano Score, one by Karl Klindworth, the other by Richard Kleinmichel. The pagination of these is the same up to page 206; separate indications are given after that point.

which it does not appear, and it undergoes, as is so often the case, numerous transformations in contour and rhythm. This theme, it may be noted, is borrowed by Wagner from one of the formulas for the "Amen" in the Catholic liturgy of the court church at Dresden; and it was also borrowed before him by Mendelssohn for use in his "Reformation" symphony.

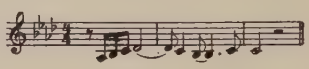
Almost immediately comes, with all the militant power of the trombones, fortissimo, the theme of *Faith*, a triumphant proclamation like a chorale: (page 4, system 4).

III. FAITH

A peculiar effect of insistence, of certitude, is given by its repetition a minor third higher, in a new key, and then again a minor third higher; after which it is continued with a following cadence and a syncopated movement, diminuendo, ending on a minor chord, and is further wrought through a stately climax to a final resting-place upon the A-flat major chord, pianissimo (page 5, system 5). Here closes the first part of the Prelude. There is a light roll, as a shudder, upon the kettledrum: and then begins an elaboration and working out of the theme of the Last Supper in a certain tragic vein; an especial prominence is given to a portion of that theme which is used

with reference to the Spear, here and later in the work. (Page 6, 5th system, and 1st of page 7.)

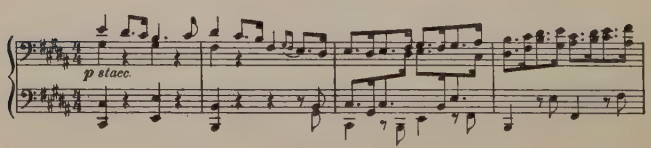
IV. THE SPEAR



ACT I.

With a final repetition of the Last Supper theme ascending in fragments in softest pianissimo the Prelude ends on the dominant seventh chord of A-flat, and the curtain is immediately parted upon the first scene of the drama. We hear the Last Supper theme blown in the distance as a reveillé by wind instruments on the stage. After Gurnemanz's half-humorous rousing of the sleeping esquires, the brass instruments, also distant upon the stage, intone the Grail theme, then the Faith theme, as a solemn call to prayer, at which all kneel and bow in worship. A sort of march-like theme is used to indicate the Order of the Grail — clearly derived directly from the theme of Faith, and little more than a rhythmic transformation of it. It first appears when Gurnemanz tells the esquires it is time to expect the king. (Page 10, system 1.)

CHORUS OF THE GRAIL KNIGHTS

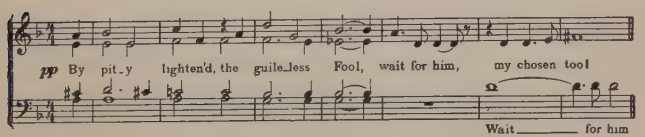


When Gurnemanz sees the litter of the king approaching on the way to the bath, the motive of Amfortas's suffering is announced in the orchestra, picturing Amfortas's woe — a theme of heaviness, deriving much of its significance from its augmented interval and irregularly syncopated accompaniment. (Page 10, 1st system.)

V. AMFORTAS'S SUFFERING

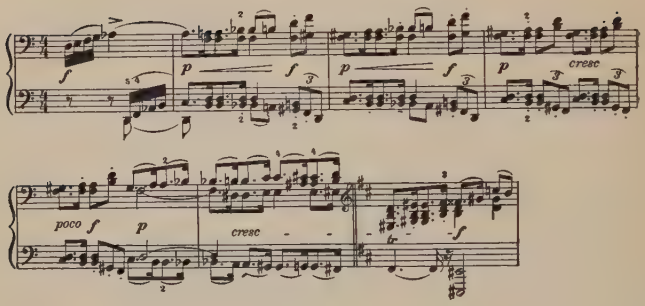
As Gurnemanz sadly acknowledges the present hopelessness of relieving the king, we hear the tones of the Motto of Promise (page 12, system 1), that later comes in more complete form as the prophecy is disclosed, as follows:

VI. MOTTO OF PROMISE



Then comes the rush of Kundry's mad approach, for which the orchestra presents two themes. First, before her appearance, the Riding Motive (page 13, system 3), that is later used in very different connections, in the manner of a description — as, for instance, when Parsifal tells of his roaming through the forest; or when Kundry

VII. KUNDRY'S RIDING MOTIVE



condemns him to endless wanderings; or when on his return he describes those wanderings. It may, however, for convenience be called from the circumstances of its first appearance by the name just affixed to it.

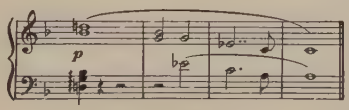
Then, as she emerges, comes a motive that is used throughout the drama in connection with certain phases of her character, her wildness and

VIII. KUNDRY

ungoverned impetuosity; it contains the implication of her curse, driving her through the world without rest, and of her demoniac laughter — these may be heard in the furiously descending chromatic passages of minor thirds and semitones, through three octaves, as it is employed here,

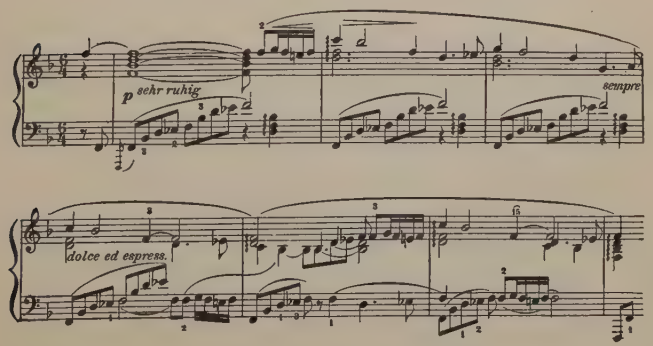
though afterwards it is often used in a briefer compass. (Page 14, system 3.) As Kundry hands the vial to Amfortas there is heard a motive in descending diatonic thirds signifying Kundry's service as a helpful messenger of the Grail, and reappearing in the third act, where she penitently comes forth again for service. It may be called the motive of Kundry's service: (page 15, system 2.)

IX. KUNDRY'S SERVICE



As a pendant and a contrast to the distressful theme of Amfortas's suffering comes now the motive that accompanies his contemplation of the morning glory of the forest; it may be called the motive of the Glory of the Dawn: (page 17, system 4.)

X. THE GLORY OF THE DAWN



It is employed with exquisite skill in the beautiful passage that follows, in connection with the motive of suffering and with fragments of the Faith theme, the motto of Promise and Kundry's themes, in elaborating the succeeding scene between Amfortas, Gurnemanz and Kundry. (Pages 17–23.) The curious may find here some of Wagner's effective contrapuntal subtleties, as for instance where Amfortas's theme and that of the Glory of the Dawn are combined in double canon. (Page 23, system 1, and again, page 34, system 2.)

Amfortas passes on, and Gurnemanz, left alone with the esquires and Kundry, gives the long explanation of what has gone before, setting forth the dramatic situation. In this narrative the style is remarkably varied, and those whose ears are attuned to the art with which Wagner has treated it, will miss the tedium that many have found in it. All the motives hitherto mentioned appear in it as a whole and as fragments, in various guises and various harmonic transformations. A study of the text with the music will reveal the wonderful subtlety, suggestiveness and plasticity with which Wagner has interpreted and expounded the scene in his music.

As Amfortas proceeds, the esquires begin their suspicious and hostile remarks about Kundry. "Are not the very beasts here holy?" she asks in answer to their teasing, and we hear the Grail motive (page 23, system 4). In Gurnemanz's defence of her may be noted the recurrence of the theme of the Last Supper as he speaks of her effort to be shriven of her sins (page 27, system 1), the

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GURNEMANZ'S HUT BY THE MEADOW

ACT III, SCENE 1

Motto of Promise (system 3) and the Faith theme (system 4). A new theme enters as Gurnemanz describes Titurel's finding of Kundry in unconsciousness, as the result of the magic spell cast upon her. It is the theme of Sorcery, as exercised by Klingsor, of very frequent recurrence in the score. It consists of an alternately rising and falling chromatic movement to chromatic harmonies in the bass, thus (page 28, system 3):

XI. MOTIVE OF SORCERY

At Gurnemanz's impassioned apostrophe to the "wounding, wonderful and hallowed spear," the Saviour's cry of anguish (from the theme of the Last Supper) is heard (page 31, system 1). The return of two of the esquires from the lake interrupts the talk of the old man, — we hear the motive of Amfortas's suffering as the question is put how he fares (page 34, system 1). The Glory of the Dawn is again suggested in the answer, (system 2) but the Suffering motive at once returns. Then Gurnemanz goes on with his narration of how the Grail was entrusted to Titurel and how disaster came to Amfortas. This is accompanied by a portion of the Phrase of the Grail Knights (page 35, system 1), and then by another derivative from the same theme, rhythmically and harmonically modified (page 35, system 3, and again,

page 36, system 4). Still another modification appears on page 37, system 3, intertwined with suggestions of the Grail Theme. In the meantime there have been several recurrences of the Theme of the Last Supper (page 35, system 4) and of the Grail Theme.

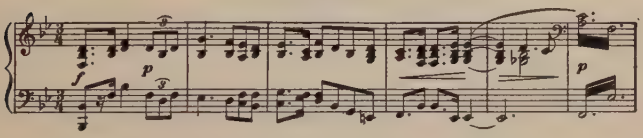
Now comes the Klingsor motive as Gurnemanz describes the magician's vain attempts to gain membership in the knights' company (page 38, system 2).

XII. KLINGSOR

When Gurnemanz tells of Klingsor's magic garden (page 40, system 2), there are fragmentary hints, — no more — of the delicious melody sung in the second act by the flower maidens, and there to be described and quoted. As he finishes his recital he quotes the Grail's prophecy of the coming deliverer (page 44, system 2), and the four esquires repeat it after him — "Through pity enlightened the Guileless Fool" (page 44, system 3), but they do not finish it — "Wait for him, my chosen tool;" they are interrupted by the violent incursion of Parsifal held a prisoner by indignant knights who have caught him red handed. With his first words is heard the motive that is devoted to him throughout; brilliant, militant, full of youthful exuberance (page 48, system 2). A few fragments of it have been heard in the agitated music

that precedes, together with a hint of the Swan harmonies. This is Parsifal's theme:

XIII. PARSIFAL



Gurnemanz's reproaches are couched in musical terms of great tenderness and beauty. In them we hear the curiously characteristic harmonies of the swan as they occur in "Lohengrin," [1] — here enwrapped in the arpeggios of harps and violins but plainly discernible as based on the following forms (page 50, system 6, and page 51, systems 1 and 2).

SWAN HARMONIES

As Gurnemanz questions him as to his name, there is the first suggestion of the motive of Her-

[1] Self quotation of this sort with a deliberate purpose is not unknown to students of Wagner's works; they will find Hans Sachs quoting from "Tristan und Isolde" in the third act of "Die Meistersinger" — just as they will find Mozart quoting from "Le Nozze di Figaro," in the last act of "Don Giovanni."

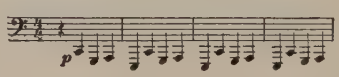
zeleide, his mother, who called him many names that he cannot now recall (page 54, system 2).

XIV. HERZELEIDE

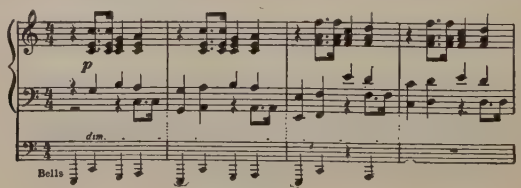
Its tender strains accompany the first entrance of compassion into this ignorant wight's heart, as later they accompany Kundry's well calculated assault upon his feelings in the second act.

Gurnemanz escorts the young man to the Grail Temple, and as they proceed, the scene shifts, gradually moving past as "time is changed to space." This transformation is accompanied by an indescribably rich and varied orchestral passage, based chiefly on the Bell Theme — the notes tolled by the bells of the Grail Castle heard first from afar, then louder and louder, as follows (page 63, system 2):

XV. BELL THEME

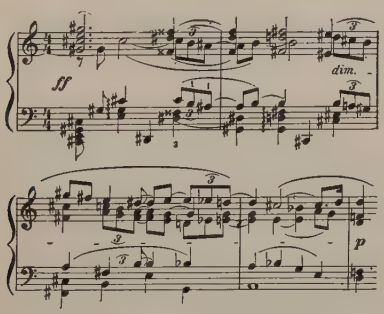


This is elaborated in the accompanying figure thus:



Many of the other themes are woven into this tonal fabric, especially the Grail Theme. A new and important theme enters before the great hall is reached, a theme that presages the scene of anguish about to be witnessed there. It is entitled, in the thematic analyses that have the authority of Wagner behind them, the theme of the Saviour's Lament. It is used, however, largely to depict the anguish of Amfortas and his sufferings, mental and physical, resulting from his sin and the hurt of soul and body that came to him therefrom. It is a theme of poignant, searching quality, with drastic dissonances and syncopations, the very embodiment in music of the suffering it represents. Here it is (page 66, system 2):

XVI. THE SAVIOUR'S LAMENT



It forms the climax of the orchestral interlude accompanying the scenic transformation. The Bell Theme constitutes still, however, the chief substance of this music; and to its march-like rhythm the knights enter and take their places at the tables. The Grail Theme and the Faith

Theme are also heard. The following scene is of unexampled dramatic power and musical effectiveness, a wonderful and deeply impressive stage picture. The choral effects are treated with the subtlest mastery, the climax being reached in the chorus of boys' voices floating from the topmost reaches of the vast dome as in celestial harmony. The voicing of Amfortas's woe reaches the highest pitch of Wagner's musical eloquence; the uncovering of the Grail and the representation of its sacred function are passages that encroach upon the limits of dramatic impressiveness, suffused as they are in an atmosphere of mystic religious exaltation.

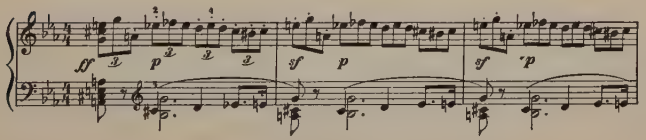
ACT II.

The emotional and ethical note is completely changed in the second act. The introduction shows us the malignant workings of Klingsor's evil mind; and then we are taken into the midst of a garden of musical delights such as Wagner never surpassed for brilliancy, glow, insinuating rhythm, and iridescent harmonization of enticing melodies. Again the note changes, and we are shown a scene of passion, the strenuous clash of two souls. The prelude represents Klingsor's demoniacal malignity as he plies his arts of wizardry in his castle, observing the approach of Parsifal through his magic glass and evoking the presence of Kundry. It is based on the Klingsor Theme, the motive of Sorcery, Kundry's Theme, with a suggestion of the theme of the Saviour's Lament.

In the dialogue which ensues, still more of the preceding motives are incorporated. Thus, as Klingsor speaks of the Fool's approach to his magic tower, the Motto of Promise is momentarily heard, and again in various rhythmic modifications; the motive of Amfortas's suffering (page 115, system 4), the Parsifal theme (page 119, system 3), Kundry's Riding Motive, — here descriptive of Parsifal's impetuous onslaught upon the Castle Guards (page 120, system 3). The motive of Herzeleide is hinted at (page 124, system 3), as Klingsor refers to the methods that Kundry is about to employ upon the stripling.

After the disappearance of the magic tower and the disclosure of the wizard's fairy garden, the Parsifal theme is heard, *piano*, as the hero himself gazes down upon it from the wall, and a variant of the riding motive shows the confusion of the Flower Maidens at the sudden apparition of the victorious youth. In various forms there is heard the Lament of the Flower Maidens, above which the voices mingle in a chorus of complex partwriting. It is the first of a number of themes relating to them and their charms and trials: of

XVII. LAMENT OF THE FLOWER MAIDENS



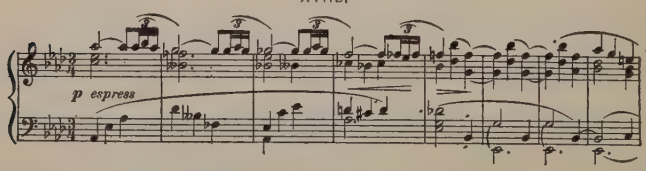
which the basis is a short chromatic succession, topped by ornamental triplet figures in a variety

of forms, all of the most entrancing, melodic beauty, and brilliant, shifting harmony. All is gay, jocose, full of animation. The excitement of the maidens and the agitation of the music gradually quiet down, as we are led to the central point of the scene, the concerted attack of the maidens upon Parsifal's unthinking innocence, as they circle about him singing their theme of Caressing. This appears in several sections (page 147, 1st system):

XVIIa. THEME OF CARESSING

The last section of their song is of a tantalizing, teasing expression, partly in enticement, partly in derision of the young man who fears women.

XVIIb.



It is interesting to note Wagner's own comment upon this scene; he desired, he said, the note of

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ON THE WAY TO THE TEMPLE
(TRANSFORMATION PANORAMA)

Act III

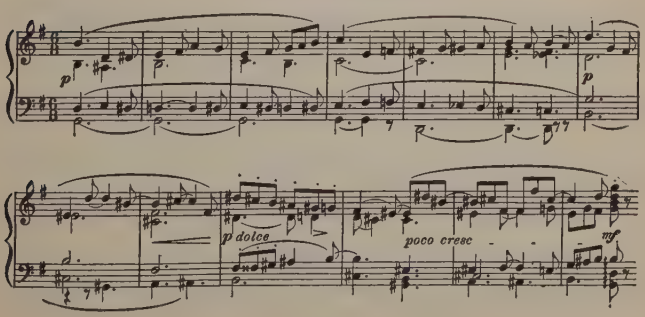
caress, of childish naiveté, and not at all the exciting element of sensual allurement in it.

When Kundry appears and calls him by his name, Parsifal, then hearing it for the first time in the course of the drama, is reminded of his

XVIIc.

mother and we hear the Herzeleide motive (page 167, last system). The Motto of Promise is repeated. The most important feature of the scene that follows is Kundry's long narration to Parsifal of his own childhood with his mother and her grief at his departure. It is purely lyric, one of the few extended passages of vocal melody in the drama, a passage of delicious tenderness and beauty. (Page 175, system 2.) Its beginning is thus:

XVIII. KUNDRY'S NARRATIVE



The Herzeleide motive appears in it with a slight change of rhythmic characteristic (page 177, system 3) — and the kinship of the two melodies will at once strike the listener.

A second section expresses Herzeleide's grief at her son's disappearance. (Page 178, system 4.)

XIX. HERZELEIDE'S GRIEF

This theme accompanies Parsifal's outburst of remorse at his blind forgetfulness (page 180, system 2), followed by the Spear motive (page 182, system 1), and the Kundry motive is suggested (system 2 and the following). As she urges him to love, the motive of Sorcery is heard, and this, preceded by the motive of Herzeleide's grief, accompanies the long kiss she presses upon his lips. He starts up in terror, and as he feels the wound of Amfortas in his heart, we hear the Spear motive (page 184, system 2), and that of Amfortas's Suffering (page 185, system 1).

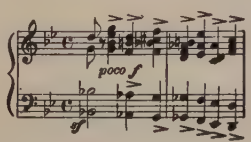
There is a well marked division of the scene at this point. Now begin the resistance that Parsifal makes to the Temptress and the delirious passion of her beseeching. The Grail motive (page 187, system 3), and the motive of the Last Supper (system 4) are heard, as Parsifal's gaze is fixed upon the Holy Cup, and the motive of the Saviour's Lament (page 188, system 2) follows.

Parsifal speaks of his "deeds of childish folly" (page 189, system 3), and the Riding motive emerges. Then a new motive is presented; a passionate theme in ascending chromatics denotes Kundry's amorous supplication (page 190, system 3):

XX. KUNDRY'S SUPPLICATION

As Kundry's arts are proved vain, she attempts another form of entreaty; urging her love upon Parsifal in a manner plaintive and resigned, to this theme. (Page 193, system 1; page 199, system 4.)

XXI. KUNDRY'S RESIGNATION



It appears first on page 199, system 3. In the course of the rapid dialogue that follows we hear the theme of Faith (page 202, system 3). A reminiscence of the Flower Maiden's siren song comes as Kundry in wild ecstasy recalls her kiss that gave him his "world wide knowledge" (page 203, system 3). As Parsifal rejects her specious arguments, his own motive is for an instant suggested (page 205, system 1). The Riding motive

recurs as Kundry summons the aid of the Spear against him (Klind., page 207, system 3; Klein., page 207, system 2), and again as she curses all his paths (Klind., page 210, system 1; Klein., page 209, system 3). As Klingsor appears from the Castle to hurl the Spear at the victorious youth, fragments of the spear motive are heard, and the spear hurtles from his hand to a long upward glissando upon the harp. A solemn proclamation of the Grail Theme (Klind., page 212, systems 1 and 2; Klein., page 211, system 4; 212, system 1) is made as Parsifal makes the victorious sign of the cross. For the last time a faint echo of the flower maidens' song is heard (Klind., page 213, system 2; Klein., page 213, system 4; 214, system 1), and Parsifal disappears.

ACT III.

The prelude to the third act announces that we are again brought to the contemplation of solemn things, of sorrow and gloom. The music opens

XXII. THEME OF DESOLATION

with a new theme, the Theme of Desolation, depicting the woe that has come upon the Grail Knights, through the unwillingness of their chief to perform his duty. This theme is followed by a version of Kundry's Riding Motive, now completely transformed in spirit, syncopated and broken in form, suggesting Parsifal's weary wanderings:

XXIII. PARSIFAL'S WANDERINGS

The Grail motive appears, in strange, distorted harmonies, also syncopated (Klind., page 214, last system; Klein., page 215, last system), and as it reaches a climax, Kundry's motive is precipitated in a rapid downward rush. (Klind., page 215, system 2; Klein., page 216, system 2.) The Spear motive is suggested immediately thereafter, and the Motto of Promise appears in an insistent, energetic rhythm, as of a battle cry. (Klind., page 215, system 3; Klein., page 216, system 3.) The Klingsor motive comes in as an accompanying figure. The motive of the Flower Maidens is heard very subdued and measured (Klind., page 216, system 1; Klein., 217, system 1), and the motive of Sorcery follows. The whole prelude may be taken as suggesting Parsifal's wandering through the world, endeavoring to bring the fulfillment of the oracle's prediction as to his coming,

thwarted by Kundry's curse, and with the briefest references to the circumstances under which it was uttered. As Gurnemanz drags Kundry out from the thicket and summons her to awake with the spring, there are hints of one of the motives of Expiation (Klind., page 216, system 4; Klein., 217, system 4), to be heard later (see No. xxvi, *b*), and a new motive of joyful character breaks for the first time into the somber tone picture, expressive of Spring. (Klind., pages 218, system 1; Klein., page 219, system 1.)

XXIV. SPRING MOTIVE

When Kundry is revived, she utters the single word "service" — the only word that passes her lips in the entire act — and there sounds in the orchestra the descending series of thirds that speak of her service, implicating also her repentance. (Klind., page 221, system 1; Klein., page 222, system 1.)

As Kundry goes about her self-appointed tasks we hear premonitions, in a broken and syncopated form, of a motive soon to come in radiant beauty (the motive representing Good Friday). (Klind., page 222, system 2; Klein., 223, system 2.) Parsifal approaches and his motive is solemnly intoned in gloomy minor harmonies, befitting his somber spirit. (Klind., page 222, last system; Klein., page 224, first system.) Gurne-

manz summons the wanderer to lay off his armor in deference to the sacredness of the spot and of the day, and we hear the Grail motive, the Spear, fragments of the theme of the Last Supper, the motive of Desolation, and as Parsifal engages in the adoration of the spear we hear the Spear motive (Klind., page 226, system 3; Klein., page 227, system 3), the Last Supper theme, the Motto of Promise (Klind., page 227, system 3; Klein., page 228, system 3), the Saviour's Complaint (Klind., 228, system 1; Klein., 228, system 4), and again the Grail. Parsifal's narration is accompanied by many familiar themes, among them prominently, the Glory of the Dawn (Klind., page 229, system 2; Klein., page 230, system 2), the motive of his Wandering (Klind., page 229, system 1; Klein., page 229, system 4), Amfortas's Suffering (Klind., 229, system 4; Klein., 230, system 4), and hints of the Good Friday music. Gurnemanz's response, telling of the woes of the Grail community, brings out the rhythmically altered version of the Faith theme that has been heard before (Klind., 236, system 3; Klein., page 237, system 3). As he speaks of the inactivity of the knights, now no more summoned to holy warfare, the march-like theme of the bells is heard (Klind., 235, system 3; Klein., 236, system 3). Through the whole, the theme of Desolation frequently recurs in an abbreviated form. A new theme enters as Gurnemanz speaks of the Spring whose water is to refresh the pilgrim. (Klind., page 239, system 1; Klein., page 240, system 1.) It is called the motto of Benediction:

XXV. MOTTO OF BENEDICTION

This recurs as Kundry bathes his feet, as Gurnemanz blesses him with water from the spring, as Kundry anoints his feet with ointment, and as Parsifal baptizes Kundry. Then come the Motives of Expiation. (Klind., page 239, system 3;

XXVI. MOTIVES OF EXPIATION

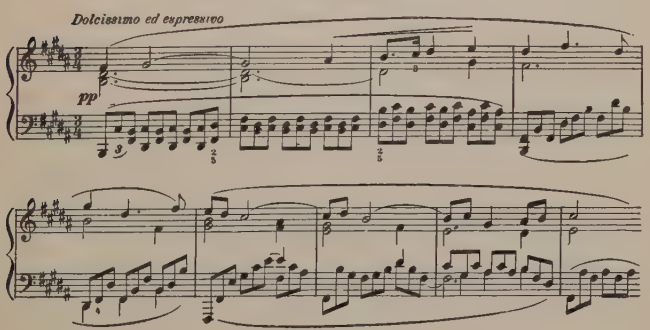
Klein., page 24, system 3.) Gurnemanz announces to Parsifal that the castle waits upon them to attend the funeral of Titurel, and we hear march-like funeral music that later accom-

panies the three in their progress thither. (Klind., page 240, system 2; Klein., page 241, system 2.)

XXVII. FUNERAL CHORUS

After his baptism of Kundry — followed by the Faith motive in tender accents — Parsifal turns to gaze on the radiant fields bathed in the morning light of Springtime; and Gurnemanz explains to him the wonder of the blooming flowers by telling him what day it is; what he sees is the spell of Good Friday. The scene is the occasion for an extended tonal poem in the orchestra, accom-

XXVIII. GOOD FRIDAY SPELL



panying the dialogue, of magical lyric beauty. It introduces still another theme, that of the Good Friday Spell. (Klind., page 245, system 4; Klein., 246, system 4.) In this tonal picture are blended

the Expiation motives, and others that have been made more familiar by frequent repetition. They are treated with the most exquisite delicacy and tenderness; and the long passage is one of the most perfectly beautiful and expressive in the whole work, as it is one of the most famous and one of those most often played as a concert excerpt. Only in its place upon the stage, however, can it ever have its complete effect.

The three then set out for the Castle. The Bell motive booms in the distance (Klind., page 253, system 2; Klein., 254, system 2). The bass figure of the chorus is combined with it, rolling on with its insistent rhythm and recurring intervals incessantly repeated. The theme of Parsifal is proclaimed majestically and the motive of Herzeleide's Grief is again and again repeated above it. (Klind., page 254, system 2; Klein., page 255, system 2.) The Motive of Desolation reappears, and the whole orchestral force is engaged upon this gloomy and strikingly imposing movement that accompanies the scenic transformation, similar to that of the first act, but here carried out as an even more grandiose and impressive musical commentary.

Transported to the Castle of the Grail, we hear the knights singing again as they enter, but this time music of a more somber cast, as the body of Titurel is brought in upon the bier. Amfortas's long and poignantly impassioned lament is a superb example of Wagner's eloquence in musical declamation. It is accompanied by themes well known. A new motive is brought in (Klind., page

261, system 2; Klein., page 263, system 2), after the theme of Amfortas's Suffering has been briefly, but pointedly suggested; thus, as if a Holy Salute for Titurel.

XXIX. HOLY SALUTE FOR TITUREL

The further progress of Amfortas's monologue shows us a modification of the second Herzeleide motive, among others (as in Klind., page 263, system 1; Klein., page 265, system 1). The Suffering motive returns, and Amfortas's words rise to the highest pitch of tragic vehemence that knows no hope. Then appears Parsifal, stretching forth the spear and healing the sinner — the Grail motive first solemnly sounds forth, followed by the Spear motive and then the motive of Amfortas's suffering, softened and dignified as though by the coming of the new king and his power of healing. In a magnificent outburst the orchestra proclaims Parsifal's theme. He holds up the spear with its glowing point and the theme of the Last Supper is heard, followed by an altered form of the Faith theme and the Spear motive. As Parsifal ascends the altar and uncovers the Grail we hear the motives of the Grail and of Faith, with lambent harp tones flickering about them. The chorus softly chants, to the Motto of Promise, the words "Redemption to the Redeemer," continuing with the

Last Supper Theme. To the voices of the knights are joined those of the boys in the extreme regions of the dome — again as if in celestial harmonies from ethereal spheres.

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